Town Meeting Coordinating Committee, Subcommittee #1
Meeting of Tuesday, October 5, 2010
Town Hall, Romer Room

Attendance: Adrienne Terrizzi, Rob Crowner, Mary Streeter, Anurag Sharma. Also: Peggy Roberts, Nonny Burack.

1. Call to order: Mary calls the meeting to order at 3:37pm.

2. Minutes: The minutes of the September 21, 2010 meeting are approved with minor amendments by consensus.

3. Questions for moderators: The subcommittee discusses the following issues that might be raised by the Town Moderator at the moderators' meeting:
  • What changes should be made to the bylaw to accommodate electronic voting?
  • Assuming that electronic voting would be added to the list of possible voting options rather than replacing tally card voting with it, how should it be determined which method to use for a given vote? Should this be the moderator's prerogative or Town Meeting's? When should such a determination be made?
  • What are the pros and cons of using electronic voting for all votes versus retaining an initial voice vote?
  • Should there be an option to request whether an electronic vote will be published or not?

4. Discussion of electronic voting: Adrienne states that the economic analysis previously reviewed does not seem to provide a strong enough basis upon which to base a decision. Sharma summarizes the remaining important questions as: Does electronic voting work well enough for the Amherst demographic? And: Does Town Meeting want to use it? Adrienne states that the subcommittee is tasked with assembling the information that will enable the body to make a good decision. Mary notes that some current members will refuse to serve in Town Meeting if it were to rely on this kind of technology, but Sharma points out that some people refuse to serve now because of a perception that time is often wasted.

Adrienne and Mary agree to examine a representative sample of Town Meeting recordings to measure how much time is actually spent on voting and other elements of a TM session. The subcommittee discusses whether the element "calling the previous question" should be counted and analyzed.

5. Adjournment: The meeting is adjourned at 4:14pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Crowner

Documents provided: none.